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ESSENTIALS OF ISLAM 1

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ESSENTIALS OF ISLAM (1)

With the aid of Allahu Taala, Who keeps all creatures in existence every moment, Who is always omnipresent and overseeing and gives all the favors and gifts, now we begin to explain the blessed utterance of our Prophet (sall-Allahu Taala alaihi wa sallam).

Our beloved superior Hazrat Umar ibn al-Khattab (radiy-Allahu Taala anh), who was a heroic leader of Muslims, one of the highest of the Prophet's Companions, and was famous for his truthfulness, stated:

"It was such a day that a few of us, the Companions, were in the presence and service of Rasulullah (sall-Allahu alaihi wa sallam)." That day, that hour was so blessed, so valuable a day that one could hardly have the chance to live it once again. On that day, it fell to his lot to be honored with being in the Prophet's company, near him, and to see his blessed face, which was food for spirits and pleasure and comfort to souls. To emphasize the value and honor of that day, he said, "It was such a day..." Could there be another time as honorable and valuable as one at which it falls to one's lot to see Jebrail (Archangel Gabriel, alaihi-salam) in the guise of a human being, to hear his voice and hear the knowledge men need as beautifully and clearly as possible through the blessed mouth of Rasulullah (sall- Allahu Taala alaihi wa sallam)?

"At that hour, a man came near us like the rising of a full moon. His clothes were extremely white and his hair was very black. Signs of travel, such as dust and perspiration were not seen on him. None of us among the Sahaba of the Prophet (sall-Allahu alaihi wa sallam), recognized him; that is, he was not one of the people we had seen or known before. He sat down in the presence of Rasulullah (sall-Allahu Taala alaihi wa sallam). He placed his knees near the Prophet's blessed knees." This person, in the guise of a human figure, was the angel named Jebrail. Although his way of sitting seems to be incompatible with manners (adab), it showed us a very important fact: in learning religious knowledge, shyness has no place, nor does pride or arrogance become a master. Hazrat Jebrail, with this behavior, wanted to show the Sahaba that everybody should ask what he wanted to know about Islam freely from teachers without feeling shy, for there should not be shyness in learning Islam or embarrassment in performing, teaching or learning one's duties towards Allahu Taala.

"That noble person put his hands on Rasulullah's (sall-Allahu Taala alaihi wa sallam) blessed knees. He asked Rasulullah: 'Oh Messenger of Allah! Tell me what Islam is and how to be a Muslim.' "

Lexical meaning of '**islam'** is 'to surrender in submission.' Rasulullah (sall-Allahu Taala alaihi wa sallam) explained that the word '**islam**' was the name of [the group of] five basic essentials in the religion of Islam, which are:

1. Rasulullah (sall-Allahu Taala alaihi wa sallam) said that the first of the essentials of Islam was "**to say the Kalimat ash-shahada**"; that is, one should say, "**Ash'hadu an la ilaha illa Allah wa ash'hadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh**." In other words, a sane person who has reached the age of puberty and who can talk has to say, **"On the earth or in the sky, there is nothing nor anyone but Allahu Taala who has the right to be worshipped and Who is worthy of deifying. The real Deity is Allahu Taala alone. He is the Wajib ul-wujud. Every kind of superiority exists in Him. No defect exists in Him. His name is Allah,"** and to believe in this absolutely with all their heart. Also one should say and believe: "The most noble person named Muhammad ibn Abdullah who had a face that was rosy in appearance, white-reddish, bright and lovely, with black eyes and brows, a blessed wide forehead and beautiful manners, whose shadow never fell on the ground, who was soft-spoken and was called Arab because he had been born in Mecca of Hashemite-descent, is the human being and Messenger sent by Allahu Taala." The Prophet's mother was Hazrat Amina bint (daughter of) Wahab. His birth in Mecca honored the world [at the dawn of Monday, April 20, in the (Gregorian) year 571]. When he was forty, he was informed that he was the Prophet [Monday, Ramadan 17, 610]. That was named the year of '**Bi'tha**' (a prophet's being sent for calling people to the right path). After this, he invited people to Islam, in Mecca, for thirteen years. Then he migrated (the Hijrat, Hegira) to Medina on the command of Allahu Taala. From there, he spread Islam everywhere. Ten years after the Hijrat, he passed away in Medina in July 632 (on Monday 12, Rabi al- Awwal).*

* According to historians, the Prophet entered the cave at the Sawr Mountain towards evening on Thursday 27th of the month Safar in the (Gregorian) year 622, during his migration (the Hijrat) from al-Makkat al-Mukarrama to al-Madinat al-Munawwara. He left the cave on Monday night and entered Quba, a regional district near Medina, on Monday 8th of the month Rabi ul-awwal (20th of September in Gregorian calendar and 7th of September in Julian calendar). This happy day became

2. The second of five essentials of islam is "**to perform salat** (ritual prayers) **in due course"** five times daily, fulfilling its conditions and fards." It is fard for every Muslim to know its due time and perform **salat**, five times every day. By following calendars that are wrongly prepared by ignorant or non-madhhabi (one who does not follow one of the four madhhabs; non-Sunni) people, performing a salat before its prescribed time is a grave sin, and this salat is not valid. This also causes the initial sunna salat of the noon prayer and the fard salat of the evening prayer to be performed within the time of karaha (periods of time in which performing salat is sinful). Time for a salat is understood by the muazzin's (person calling muslims to salat) calling the azan (call to salat). [The voices of disbelievers and people of bid'ah and the sounds of the instruments like loudspeakers are not called the azan al-Muhammadi (call to salat for Muslims).] Salat has to be performed paying attention to its fard, wajib and sunna [the various rules within any salat], before its prescribed time is over, submitting the heart to Allahu Taala. In the ***Quran al-Karim***, ritual prayers are called 'salat', which means man's praying, angel's making istighfar (seeking Allahu Taala's forgiveness) and Allahu Taala's showing compassion. In Islam, salat means to do certain actions and to recite certain things as written in books of ilm al-hal. Salat is started with the **takbir al-iftitah**, by saying the words '**Allahu akbar**', for men, after raising the hands up to the ears and completed while clasping the hands under the navel and, for women, after raising the hands up to the level of the shoulders and completed as they are placed over the breasts. It ends with the **salams** being given both when turning the head to the right and to the left shoulders at the end of the last sitting posture.

3. The third of the five essentials of Islam is "**to give zakat for one's property**." The lexical meaning of zakat is 'purity, to praise, and become good and beautiful.' In Islam, **zakat** means 'for a person who

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the beginning of Muslims' Hijri (of the Hijrat) Shamsi (solar) calendar. The beginning of the Hijri Shamsi calendar adopted by the Shi'ites had been six months earlier than this; that is, it starts with the Nawruz festival of the Majusi disbelievers (fire worshippers) on March 20. The Prophet stayed at Quba until Thursday, when duration of the day was equal to that of the night all over the world, and left that district on Friday, entering Medina the same day. The outset of the month of Muharram in the same year (Friday, 16th of July) was accepted as the beginning of Hijri Qamari (lunar) calendar. The Hijri Shamsi year in which a Gregorian year starts is 622 years less than that Gregorian new year, and the Gregorian year in which a Hijri Shamsi year starts is 621 years more than that Hijri Shamsi new year.

has property of zakat more than one needs and exceeding the certain amount called **nisab** to separate a certain amount of one's property and give it to those Muslims defined in the ***Quran al-Karim*** without embarrassing them.' Zakat is given to seven kinds of people. There are four types of zakat in all four madhhabs: the zakat of gold and silver, the zakat of commercial goods, the zakat of four-legged stock animals that graze in the fields for more than half a year, and the zakat of all kinds of crops obtained from the soil. This fourth type of zakat, called **ushr**, is paid as soon as the crop is harvested. The other three are paid one year after they reach the amount of nisab.

4. Islam's fourth essential is "to fast every day of the month of Ramadan." Fasting is called 'sawm.' Sawm means to protect something against something else. In Islam, sawm means to protect oneself against three things [during the days] of the month of Ramadan, as they were commanded by Allahu Taala: eating, drinking and sexual intercourse. The month of Ramadan begins upon seeing the new moon on the (western) horizon. It may not begin at the time calculated in calendars.

5. Islam's fifth essential is "for the able person to perform the hajj (pilgrimage) once in their life." For an able person who has money enough for going to and coming back from the city of Mecca including an amount sufficient for the subsistence of the family they leave behind until they come back, it is fard once in their lifetime to perform tawaf around the Kaaba and to perform Waqfa on the plain of Arafat, provided that the way is safe and their body is healthy.

"Upon hearing these answers from Rasulullah (sall-Allahu Taala alaihi wa sallam), that person said, 'Oh! Rasul-Allah! You have told the truth.' " Hazrat Umar (radiy-Allahu anh) said that the Sahabis who were present were astonished at the behavior of this person who asked a question and confirmed that the answer was correct. One asks with a view to learning what one does not know; but to say, "You have told the truth," indicates that one already knows it.

The highest of the five essentials listed above is to say the Kalimat ash-shahada and believe its meaning. The next highest is to perform salat. Next to this is to fast. Then comes the hajj. The last one is to give zakat. It is unanimously certain that the Kalimat ash-shahada is the highest. Regarding the sequence of the other four, most Islamic scholars said the same as we have said above. The Kalimat ash-shahada became fard firstly in the beginning of Islam. Salat five times daily became fard during the Miraj (see p.41) in the twelfth year of Bi'tha, a

year and some months before the Hijrat. Fasting during Ramadan became fard in the month of Shaban, the second year of the Hijrat. Paying zakat became fard in the month of Ramadan, in the same year when fasting became fard. Hajj became fard the ninth year of the Hijrat.

If a person denies, disbelieves, refuses, makes fun of or disregards one of these five essentials of Islam, they become an unbeliever (may Allahu Taala protect us!). Similarly, he who does not accept any of the things which are unanimously and clearly declared to be halal (permitted) or haram (forbidden), or who says 'halal' about haram or 'haram' about halal, becomes a disbeliever. If a person denies or dislikes one of the inevitably known Islamic teachings, that is, teachings that are heard and known even by ignorant people that live in Muslim countries, they become a disbeliever.*

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* For example, eating pork, having alcoholic drinks, gambling and, for a woman or girl, showing herself to others with nothing to cover her head, hair, arms and legs and, for a man, showing himself to others without covering the part between the knees and the navel, are all haram. That is, Allahu Taala has forbidden these acts. The four right madhhabs, which explain the commands and prohibitions of Allahu Taala, described differently the **awrat** parts of the male body that are haram to look at or to show to others. It is fard for every Muslim to cover those parts of the body described by the madhhab he belongs to. It is haram for others to look at those who have not covered these parts of their bodies. It is written in ***Kimya as-Saada*** that it is haram for women and girls to go out without covering their heads, hair, arms, legs, and it is also haram to go out with thin, ornamented, tight and perfume-scented dresses.

Their mothers, fathers, husbands and brothers who give permission, consent and approval to their going out as such will share the sin and penalty (adhab); that is, they will burn in Hell all together. If they repent, they will be forgiven and will not be burned. Allahu Taala likes those who repent. In the third year of the Hijrat, sane girls who had reached the age of puberty and women were ordered not to show themselves to those men that are not forbidden to be married to (namahram) men. We should not believe the claim, of British spies and those ignorant people who have been duped by them, that the revelation of the ayat about veiling (hijab) was an evidence that the commandment to veil was later fabricated by scholars of (Islamic science) fiqh.

A person who says that they are a Muslim has to know whether everything they will do is compatible with Islam or not. If they do not know, then they have to learn by asking one of the scholars of Ahl as-Sunna or by reading their books. If what they do is not compatible with Islam, they will not escape from sin or disbelief. They have to truly repent every day. The sin or disbelief of which is repented will

definitely be forgiven. If they do not repent, they will pay for it both in the world and in Hell. Such punishments are written in various parts of our book. The Muslim who has committed a grave sin will be taken out of Hell after being burned as much as the punishment for that sin is. Those who do not believe in Allahu Taala and disbelievers who try to destroy Islam, zindiqs, will burn in Hell eternally.

Parts of the body that men and women are to cover during salat, or at any place, are called '**awrat'** (intimate) areas**.** It is haram to display one's awrat areas or to look at others' awrat areas. If a person says that there is no concept with the name of awrat in Islam, he becomes an unbeliever. If a person says 'halal' about or does not pay due importance to, that is, does not fear of prescribed penalty (adhab) for, displaying or looking at an area which is awrat according to unanimity (ijma), which means it is in accordance with all four of the madhhabs, he becomes an unbeliever. As such is women's displaying their awrat areas or singing or reciting *Mawlid* (celebration of Prophet Muhammad's 'alaihi-salam birthday) among men. In the Hanbali madhhab, the area between the groin and the knees of the male body is not awrat.

A person who says he is Muslim has to learn and pay due importance to the essentials of iman and Islam in addition to those commandments (fard) and prohibitions (haram) that were reported unanimously by the four madhhabs. Being unaware is not a valid excuse and is identical to disbelief despite being aware. The female bodily exterior, with the exception of her hands and face, is awrat according to all four madhhabs. If a person, out of not paying due importance, exposes a region of their body that is awrat without unanimity, that is, not awrat in one of the other three madhhabs, he will not become an unbeliever but it is a grave sin according to the madhhab he follows. An example of this is a man's exposing his thigh, the part between the groins and the knees. It is fard to learn what one does not know.

As soon as one learns, one must repent and cover oneself. Lying, gossip, backbiting, slander, theft, cheating, treachery, hurting someone's feelings, mischief-making, using someone's property without permission, not paying a laborer's or porter's due, rebellion, that is, opposing the laws and the government's orders, and not paying taxes are sins, too. Committing them against disbelievers or in non-Muslim countries is haram as well. It is not unbelief (kufr) but sin (fisq) for non-educated people not to know the teachings that are not so wide-spread or indispensable for non-educated people to know.